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# One Year After U.S. Raid, a Lower Libyan Profile

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WASHINGTON, April 11 — One year after American warplanes attacked Libya, American officials say that Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi appears to have reduced his involvement in terrorism, but the reasons they cite seem to go beyond the shock of the bombings.

The Libyan leader has suffered a serious military setback as Chad has driven his army out of most of the Chadian territory it had occupied. Restiveness is reported in the Libyan officer corps, and economic problems are severe, though American intelligence has not been able to identify any organized opposition group.

Furthermore, the American bombings on April 15, 1986, galvanized the West Europeans, provoking tightened security measures. The expulsion of more than 100 Libyan diplomats from Western Europe and a closer watch on those who remained has been followed by a sharp drop in terrorist actions in Europe by Middle East groups. The number of incidents fell to 39 in 1986, from 74 in 1985, according to State Department statistics.

Worldwide, however, terrorism has showed little change. "The bombing of Libya did not appreciably reduce the volume of total international terrorism," said Brian Jenkins, a specialist on terrorism for the Rand Corporation, the research organization. "The total for '86 was below '85 but above the average of '83 to '85."

## Bombing 'Changed Equation'

"The bombing did do one thing — it changed the equation," Mr. Jenkins said in an interview. "It says there is a cost to be paid if one gets caught blatantly sponsoring terrorist actions, and that cost can include military action."

But the main effect, Mr. Jenkins predicted, may be that nations will take more care to conceal their involvement in terrorism. Since Western intelligence agencies already have trouble getting a clear picture of governmental involvement, he said, "State-sponsored terrorism may decline as an issue, not because the behavior has changed but because greater effort is made to hide what is taking place."

In a series of high-level meetings in early February to review United States policy on the Middle East, Administration officials say they decided to make every effort to diminish the visible personal involvement of President Reagan and other Cabinet members in responding to terrorist attacks. In the case of the American hostages being held in Lebanon, the President has stopped giving detailed comments, except to stress the limits on the Government's ability to go to their rescue.

The White House goal is to avoid public Presidential involvement that magnifies the terrorists' action and gives exaggerated weight to their demands. The hope is that the lower profile will remove one factor encouraging hostage-taking.

## Evidence of Involvement

The principal evidence of Libyan involvement in terrorism has been the assassination of Qaddafi foes abroad. Such acts have usually been preceded by Libyan warnings and followed by official announcements in Tripoli.

Other targets have included European, American and Israeli installations and personnel. But before the bombing, intelligence reports in Washington portrayed Colonel Qaddafi as usually backing off from attacks on Americans once the United States made clear it knew he was involved.

The American bombing attack a year ago came after President Reagan linked Libya to an explosion at a West Berlin discotheque. An American serviceman and a Turkish woman were killed and 230 other people were wounded.

American counterterrorism officials say that for three or four months after the jets struck Tripoli, Benghazi and elsewhere, Libyan terrorist activity ebbed. They measured this by such means as the reduced travel of Libyan agents and reduced communications traffic.

## False Information Campaign

Despite the lull, some American officials designed a campaign of false information to say that Libya was planning further attacks, including the dispatching of "hit squads" to the United States, and that Washington was considering further military action. The resulting scandal prompted Bernard Kalb to resign as State Department spokesman, even though he said he was not involved.

American officials now have little credibility among journalists on allegations of Libyan-sponsored terrorism, though they have been telling reporters recently that Libyan agents have been moving around a bit more and may be planning new attacks.

State Department officials said recently that Libyan agents had been watching French installations in West Africa and elsewhere, possibly in preparation to take revenge for

France's military support of Chad. But there was no way to confirm this report independently.

The officials also contended that Libyan agents had been contacting anti-American radical groups in the Caribbean. A Libyan was reportedly seized by the Venezuelan authorities recently with communication codes, indicating that he was setting up communications with local groups.

## Ominous or Whimsical?

Mr. Jenkins said there had been about 10 incidents of Libyans shipping weapons or contacting radical organizations in the Western Hemisphere over the last decade. "Is it just that Libyans can't resist making contact with subversive groups all over the world?" he asked. "Or do they have an overall strategy? On the one hand, it looks kind of ominous. But on the other hand, it looks whimsical."

The definition of "support" or "involvement" is elastic. Sometimes it includes direct action by Libyan agents, as in the assassinations and, according to the United States, the bombing of the West Berlin discotheque. Certain radical Palestinian groups reportedly receive money, training, passports, intelligence information and, possibly some operational direction, antiterrorism specialists say.

But other organizations, such as the Irish Republican Army and the Basque separatists in Spain, get only "money and moral support," Mr. Jenkins said. "It ranges from fraternal greetings to a kind of exhortation."

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